

ANTIFA SACRAMENTO

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Looking Back: Anti-Fascism in Northern California 2016-2017

Reposted from NoCARA



*Anti-fascist mobilization against the fascist convergence in Berkeley on August 27, 2017.
Banner reads, "Avenge Charlottesville. Defend your communities."*

As mainstream media coverage of the anti-fascist struggle has skyrocketed over the last year, we've noticed that questions surrounding it have largely been confined to concern over a narrowly defined free speech. This has been accompanied by numerous, sometimes deliberate, misrepresentations. While narratives of violence have tended to be over-represented in accounts of anti-fascist and anti-racist organizing, reporting on the alt-right has been the opposite, downplaying the violence inherent to the recently re-energized white nationalist movement. Because clashes in Northern California between anti-fascists and white supremacists have captured so much media attention over the last year, we feel it necessary to place these incidents within their proper context.

Despite the fact that California is widely seen as a bastion of liberalism and tolerance, the state is in fact home to more active hate groups than any other in the country. FBI numbers indicate that reported hate crimes in California increased 11.2% from 2015 to 2016. The *East Bay Express* noted that Northern California cities consistently rank high on the FBI's list, with San Leandro and Berkeley seeing a particularly notable spike during 2016. This has prompted UC Berkeley's student paper, the *Daily Californian*, to join ProPublica's Documenting Hate project in recording local incidents in Berkeley. Acts of racist vandalism were reported in the East Bay throughout 2017, and acts of anti-Semitism occurred in Alameda and public schools throughout the greater Bay Area. Similar evidence of growing far-right hatred and violence has been observed throughout the Central Valley. This mirrors patterns observed by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), which recorded a surge of hate crimes across the United States following the election of Donald Trump in November 2016. According to the SPLC, alt-right killings began in California and 2017 has been the deadliest year yet for far-right violence. One violent neo-Nazi organization, the Atomwaffen Division, has been connected to several murders over the last year, including in California. This group has been shown to have a presence in Northern California specifically. Atomwaffen Division is inspired by James Mason's book "Siege," which is distributed by Counter-Currents, a white nationalist publisher based in San Francisco.

Below is a partial account of far-right and white supremacist activity that occurred throughout Northern California from 2016 to 2017. The mainstream media has tended to focus their reporting on more "spectacular" occurrences like clashes at rallies and university speaking events, but as we can see from the list below, the breadth of far-right action is much wider, ranging from flyering and recruitment campaigns to attacks and even brutal murder. When reflecting on these incidents, though this list is by no means complete, it becomes clear that university speaking tours and "free speech" rallies are only the tip of the iceberg. They exist within the larger context of a growing white supremacist movement, and are but a few of the many tactics that these groups employ. Researcher Spencer Sunshine similarly analyzed the far-right mobilization throughout the country in 2017 at Political Research Associates.



Fascist wearing a Trump “Make America Great Again” hat while doing a Nazi salute in Berkeley on April 15, 2017.

2016

February

- 7th: Supporters of Roosh V, a misogynist internet personality and rape advocate, organize a worldwide meetup day. 13 meetups are scheduled in California, including locations in Orange County and Sacramento County. The meetup day is later cancelled due to widespread public outcry.
- 15th: Three men assault an African American student on the UC Davis Campus in a racially-motivated attack.

April

- 26th: Men dressed in KKK robes and hoods intimidate a mother and her child from a vehicle near a shopping center in Auburn.

May

- 3rd: Flyers promoting racial genocide are posted throughout Sacramento's midtown district. The flyers advocate for the extermination, kidnapping, and torture of Muslim and Mexican residents, and for fellow white supremacists to secure "body dump-sites". Greg Withrow, a neo-Nazi and KKK member widely credited with founding the white power skinhead movement in the late 70s, is found responsible.
- 6th: Richard Spencer accompanies Nathan Damigo and a handful of members from his new organization Identity Evropa to UC Berkeley for a "safe space to talk about race." Afterwards, IE flyers and stickers litter the campus and surrounding downtown Berkeley area.

June

- 12th: A Sacramento area pastor praises the Pulse nightclub shooting, saying that "the tragedy is that more of them didn't die."
- 26th: Matthew Heimbach's neo-Nazi group the Traditionalist Worker Party organizes an anti-antifa rally with the Golden Stake Skins at the State Capitol Building in Sacramento, which is met by hundreds of anti-racists and anti-fascists. The rally is shut down, and clashes against neo-Nazis end with 6 anti-racists stabbed and 9 hospitalized.
- 28th: A neo-Nazi threatens to kill children at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in Berkeley.

July

- 12th: KKK flyers are distributed throughout the Haight district in San Francisco.

August

- 15th: Six teenagers vandalize a neighborhood in Gold River with swastikas and racial slurs. Shortly after, posters with anti-racist messaging are put up in the area.
- 26th: Homophobic messages written with chalk are found on Sproul Plaza at UC Berkeley.

October

- 17th: Identity Evropa holds a rally at Pier 14 in San Francisco against immigration and sanctuary cities. The rally is cut short when anti-fascists begin to arrive at the scene.
- 25th: Racist graffiti is found in bathrooms at California High School in San Ramon.

November

- 8th: A white man spits on two students while shouting racist and homophobic phrases at UC Berkeley.
- 9th: A San Jose State University student is attacked and choked when her hijab is grabbed from behind.
- 10th: A Bay Area Rapid Transit passenger is harassed, called a terrorist and threatened with deportation in an unprovoked attack from another passenger.
- 12th: African American William Sims is robbed and murdered in El Sobrante by three white men in what prosecutors call a hate crime.
- 14th: UC Berkeley student is threatened and harassed for wearing a hijab by two men referencing Donald Trump.
- 16th: After a Fremont woman's bandana is perceived as a hijab, her car is broken into and her checkbook is stolen. An anti-Muslim note is left behind in the car.
- 16th: A student at Monte Vista High School in Danville writes "whites" and "colored" over urinals in a school bathroom.
- 24th: A mosque in San Jose receives a letter threatening genocide. The same letter is sent to other mosques around the country.
- 26th: A Stockton Islamic Center also receives the same genocide threat.

2017

January

- 13th: The Davis College Republicans invite Milo Yiannopoulos to speak on campus. Anti-fascists mobilize a shutdown, and the event is canceled.
- 18th: Pro-Donald Trump Nazi flyers are distributed via a network of printers at UC Berkeley.
- 20th: Nathan Damigo joins the Berkeley College Republicans and features the group's members on an alt-right livestream celebrating Trump's inauguration.
- 22nd: A woman who praised Dylan Roof vandalizes Davis Islamic Center, leaving strips of bacon and smashing several windows.
- 30th: Milo Yiannopoulos and the David Horowitz Freedom Center start a campaign against sanctuary campuses, with posters appearing at UC Berkeley and UCLA.

February

- 1st: The Berkeley College Republicans invite Milo Yiannopoulos to speak on campus. Anti-fascists mobilize a shutdown, and the event is cancelled.
- 17th: Swastikas and "Joe Mangele" are spray-painted on a garage door in San Francisco.

March

- 4th: A "March 4 Trump" rally is held at Civic Center park in downtown Berkeley, which draws together mainstream conservatives with libertarians, far-right militia members, fascists, and neo-Nazis.
- 6th: Nicholas Frabasilio assaults a UC Berkeley student while they are washing away Frabasilio's homophobic chalk graffiti on the border of the campus.
- 25th: A restaurant in Oakland is vandalized with feces smeared on the "sanctuary restaurant" sign on the window.
- 25th: Alicia Clayton organizes a Trump rally in Sacramento with members of the Golden State Skins.
- 29th: Students at Albany High School exchange Nazi salutes. An student's Instagram account is discovered to include racist remarks and threats targeting several female students at the school, all but one a person of color.

April

- 1st: White supremacist Christopher Alden Locke is exposed for continuing to terrorize a reproductive health clinic in Sacramento.
- 10th: Kyle Chapman comes to Berkeley to promote an upcoming rally and antagonize the community, eventually assaulting a local skateboarder in Civic Center Park.
- 15th: A “free speech rally” is organized in Civic Center park in downtown Berkeley, again bringing together Trump supporters, patriots, and white supremacists in a growing fascist street movement. A pickup truck drives at full speed through the street, narrowly missing counter-protesters.
- 27th: The Berkeley College Republicans invite Ann Coulter to speak on campus. The event is cancelled, but a right-wing rally consisting of alt-lite and alt-right groups gathers in downtown Berkeley at Civic Center park.
- 27th: The windows of Alchemy Collective Café, a largely Black and People of Color owned worker cooperative displaying Black Lives Matter and indigenous solidarity posters, are shot out following the far-right gathering in support of Ann Coulter.
- 28th: Ann Coulter speaks in Modesto, supported by a rally outside that includes Proud Boys and members of the Golden State Skins.

May

- 9th: Reports disclose a slew of racist and homophobic speech as well as Nazi salutes and a dance routine formed in the shape of a swastika at Piedmont High School.
- 25th: A noose is found at the Port of Oakland, the second in two weeks.
- 26th: Northern California fascists stalk Eric Clanton and harass his lawyer at a court appearance.

June

- 2nd: Graffiti using racial slurs is found two days in a row on the campus of Castro Valley High School.
- 10th: Act for America organizes anti-Muslim rallies throughout the country. One is held in San Jose, and another in Roseville is attended by various white supremacists including Identity Evropa founder Nathan Damigo. Counter-protesters show up in large numbers.
- 21st: A white supremacist drives his motorcycle through a protest in the streets of San Francisco, targeting demonstrators.

- 23rd: Pages of the Quran are ripped out and thrown at the Davis Islamic Center from a passing van, the 6th hate crime to happen to a local Islamic center in the past 6 months.
- 24th: A Quran is burnt, stuffed with bacon, and handcuffed to a fence at a South Sacramento mosque.
- 27th: While driving in Sunnyvale, Apple software engineer Evan Klinger harasses a woman on a bicycle with her daughter.

July

- 8th: Zionists block the entrance of Reem's California Bakery in Oakland, part of a broader campaign against the bakery.
- 8th: Armed members of The Red Elephants along with a group of supporters march through Berkeley with Trump flags to antagonize the community.

August

- 16th: videos surface of an Elk Grove High student carrying a backpack with a Confederate flag patch. The school declines to state if any action was taken.
- 17th: Two classroom windows are smashed at Temple Israel of Alameda.
- 17th: Stickers with anti-communist and anti-black messages are found at Kehilla Community Synagogue in Piedmont.
- 20th: Flyers displaying swastikas and anti-Muslim messages are found blocks from Islamic Center of Alameda.
- 23rd: Berkeley College Republicans and a group of supporters are joined by far-right livestreamers to infiltrate and disrupt a BAMN meeting at UC Berkeley.
- 25th: A noose is found hanging from the back of a truck in San Leandro.
- 26th: Joey Gibson organizes a rally in San Francisco for a weekend of "patriot" events in the Bay Area, bringing together a mix of far-right extremists. The event is shut down by thousands of counter-protesters.
- 27th: Amber Cummings organizes an anti-Marxism rally in Berkeley, continuing Joey Gibson's "patriot weekend." Once again, anti-fascists outnumber the alt-right and prevent the rally from happening.
- 31st: Industrial Tattoo's window displaying a "Berkeley Stands United Against Hate" sign is shot at and shattered in an attack similar to the one against Alchemy Collective in April.

September

- 6th: A noose is found at Alameda High School and investigated as a hate crime.
- 7th: A white couple in Antioch spray paints racist graffiti on and firebombs the home of their African American next door neighbors.
- 18th: A vehicle at Canyon Middle School in Castro Valley is vandalized with graffiti including racist, anti-Semitic remarks and swastikas.
- 18th: Messages written in chalk on UC Berkeley's Sproul Plaza target the LGBTQ+ community and undocumented students ahead of Free Speech Week. A Berkeley College Republicans front group, Berkeley Patriot, claims responsibility.
- 21st: A noose-like item is found at East Bay Arts High School in Hayward.
- 21st: Anti-Semitic graffiti is spray-painted on Temple Sinai in Oakland.
- 21st: The David Horowitz Freedom Center flyers the UC Berkeley campus labeling individual activists as "terrorist supporters."
- 24-27th: Milo Yiannopoulos and Berkeley Patriot organize a "Free Speech Week." Fascists converge on Berkeley to harass and attack locals.
- 28th: An anti-Semitic and racist Instagram account created by a student at Berkeley High School is discovered and triggers an investigation.

October

- 9th: Mike Pence makes an appearance in Sacramento, flanked by a far-right entourage.
- 20th: A man burns a rainbow flag at a LGBTQ center in Berkeley and punches a staff member who tries to stop him.

November

- 3rd: Neo-Nazi 4chan posters that are intentionally designed to appear innocuous and which have appeared around the country are found on the UC Berkeley campus.
- 4th: An Orangevale synagogue is vandalized with anti-Semitic posters, which included neo-Nazi imagery and references to the Daily Stormer forum. One of the posters was connected to the violent neo-Nazi group Atomwaffen, suggesting that the attack is either inspired by the group or could be attributed to it.

- 11th: A man harasses a family in Berkeley with homophobic language and assaults a Street Spirit vendor that intervenes.
- 13th: A man on the Warm Springs BART line harasses another passenger with racial slurs before escalating and assaulting him.

December:

- 15th: An eighth grade student at Piedmont Middle School is removed after uploading multiple videos threatening violence on campus while displaying firearms and using racial slurs.
- 16th: Trump supporters join with the alt-right for a rally against sanctuary cities in San Francisco.
- 24th: An Elk Grove high school student's racist Snapchat rant, calling for the death of all black people, goes viral and prompts an investigation.
- 29th: A menorah display at The Streets of Brentwood shopping center is vandalized.

Despite the growing threat of white supremacy and fascism, anti-racists and anti-fascists have kept up the fight and countered with organizing of their own. Groups patrolled their neighborhoods and campuses to remove hateful stickers, posters, and banner drops, replacing them with anti-fascist messages. Book fairs, community forums, and conferences like ROAR facilitated anti-fascist organizing and brought people together to share research, strategies, and history. Fundraising and benefit events strengthened solidarity and provided material support. Self-defense and bystander intervention trainings coupled with rapid response workshops enabled mass community defense against violent attacks. Research was done on local far-right groups and organizers, as well as those who enable them to recruit and push their politics into the mainstream. Call-in campaigns and boycotts targeted workplaces, bars and venues that supported fascists and their organizing efforts. Exposés on active alt-right organizers and aggressors were published, disrupting their activity and aiding local communities with knowledge of threats in their areas. John Ramondetta, Daniel Quillinan, and Cole White were all exposed to Berkeley residents as white supremacists, leading to Ramondetta moving out of his house and having trouble at work, while White lost his job entirely. Far-right street presence was also persistently confronted. Multitudes of people throughout Northern California showed up to counter rallies, marches, and speeches again and again. Many stepped up to do critical support work, providing dedicated hospital support, street medic care, court support and anti-repression work for those who faced charges or were wounded in the fight against fascism.

None of this activity relied on state sanction or protection. Instead, the most effective community self-defense came in the form of autonomous organizing across tendencies with a respect for differing strategies and tactics. Indeed, the state sees this kind of anti-fascist organizing as even more threatening than that of white supremacists. MuckRock analyzed reports showing that Homeland Security in Northern California has been more concerned with surveilling anti-fascists than neo-Nazis. Moreover, their intelligence takes for granted photoshopped alt-right propaganda and conspiracy theories as fact. Police in both Sacramento and Berkeley have actively aided far-right aggression against local communities. More often than not, the state's strategy has been to protect white supremacists and increase repression against anti-fascists. Berkeley PD has been given more authority and weapons to contain protests, and Berkeley mayor Jesse Arreguin expressed that he thinks antifa should be classified as a gang. In Sacramento, police recommended hundreds of charges for anti-fascists after neo-Nazis stabbed protesters at their 2016 rally.



Police equipped with riot gear and body cameras during the June 26th neo-Nazi rally in Sacramento. Officers stood back during the brawl and later attempted to block street medics from treating stabbing victims. Tear gas and tasers were deployed against anti-fascists, while neo-Nazis were provided protection and police escorts.

This points to the contradiction between how fascist aggressions are handled by the state compared with the anti-fascist response to these aggressions. On one hand, far-right attacks are reported to police, whose statistics and data are referenced in reports of increased trends

of white supremacist violence. On the other hand, it is clear that police are more interested in targeting and surveilling anti-fascists, all while they themselves continue to murder hundreds of people in the United States every year while bringing yet more into the ever-increasing racist mass incarceration system. The state's response to anti-fascist organizing is just one more way in which it upholds white supremacy. If we are to organize against the threat of the alt-right effectively, it will be in spite of state interference, not because of it. This further establishes the need for autonomous community defense and response.

Looking back on the wave of white supremacist terror and violence that characterized 2016 and 2017, it is clear that we as anti-racists and anti-fascists must enter 2018 fighting harder than ever. Fascism may be on the rise, but so are we. The state cannot and will not protect us from this growing white supremacist threat, but if there's one thing we've learned in the past two years, it's that we have the tools we need to continue combating fascism and keep building the support networks necessary to keep each other safe. In the months and years to come, we will turn to each other and face the future with resolve to keep organizing, growing, and disrupting fascism wherever it arises.



Anti-fascist demonstrators at the August 27th mobilization in Berkeley.

Did we miss something? Report hate crimes and fascist organizing efforts- **Email us!**

Locally: **AntifaSac@riseup.net**

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GENERAL